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The Path to Regulated Immortality



Vladimir Rybin*

Doctor of philosophy, Chelyabinsk state University, Russia

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***Corresponding author:** Vladimir Rybin, Doctor of Philosophy, Chelyabinsk state University, Specialist in philosophy of being, philosophy of medicine, philosophy of education, Russia

Problem Statement

5-9 June 2019 took place in Moscow the XVIII International readings in memory of N. F. Fedorov. Nikolai Russian Fedorov is an original Russian thinker, one of the representatives of the scientific and philosophical direction, called "Russian cosmism". The pathos of his teachings is associated with the imperative of the evolutionary ascent of mankind, and the main task was formulated as "the resurrection of the fathers", that is, the restoration of the forces of science of the genetic code of all previously lived on Earth generations of people with the aim of their full bodily reconstruction. Despite the mystical coloring and discussion of this idea, it has had a significant impact on philosophy and science in Russia. In particular, the follower of Fedorov was the founder of Russian cosmonautics Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, who came to the idea to explore outer space and create rockets for this purpose at a time when he realized that in the case of the project "resurrection of the fathers" reborn to a new life people will not be able to fit on the globe.

In our days, the idea of Fedorov takes on a special urgency. In the conditions of growth of technical potential of mankind, at expansion of the power of a civilization over the nature along with positive effects destructive tendencies increase also. Among them, such as the unexpected decline in the growth rate of the human population and the aging of the population (especially in developed countries), the rapid increase in mortality from "diseases of civilization", mainly from cardiovascular diseases and cancer. Recently, a lot of talk is about the radical transformation of the human body using the latest achievements of biology and medicine, in particular by means of technological and genetic engineering (transhumanism project). Thus, the threat of "human death", which Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes and other structuralist philosophers spoke about 50 years ago by means of metaphors, is becoming a reality today. It is a problem of direct, physical survival of man and humanity.

Original Position

As part of the Readings at the Institute of philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences on June 6, 2019, I read the report "the Reality of individual immortality as a General revolutionary

problem". The main content of the report is that the passive and fatalistic attitude towards human death must now be replaced by an active and conscious impact on this process in the form of "regulated immortality". In fact, it is a fight against aging, because aging is a slow dying. To make such statements allows me not only the status of a professional philosopher, but also a professional physician: more than 20 years I worked in clinical medicine as a specialist in anesthesiology and resuscitation. The sequence of arguments is as follows:

A. Before proceeding to the discussion of practical approaches to regulated immortality, it is necessary to rethink a number of theoretical issues. It is necessary to look at the current situation from a higher, philosophical point of view and previously develop an updated understanding of such phenomena as immortality, life and the essence of living matter, man, the biosphere. This topic is devoted to the subsequent presentation, where the known facts are put in a different, unusual relationship.

B. Human immortality should be understood as an opportunity to extend human life beyond what is now seen as natural, habitual and maximal. This means that we are talking about relative, but not absolute immortality. Only the World Universe can be absolutely immortal, and even then, some physicists deny this view.

Essence of Life

Now, about life. The essence of life modern science connects with the ability to self-development and evolution. Its main property, as stated in encyclopedias and reference books, is growth-increasing complexity, diversity, strength. This is true, but such a statement is at least incomplete, since the ability to grow and have non-living systems: crystals, as noted by Herbert Spencer, grow, fire spreads, stars evolve.

The difference between living and non-living systems lies in another plane. Non-living systems are deprived of one quality, namely the internal ability to die-non-living systems cease to exist only when external resources disappear: crystals lose the

environment of their growth, fire burns all its fuel, stars consume their composition. This can be called extinction or exhaustion, but it is not the death that living beings and systems die. The death of living beings is not so much the result of external as of internal processes. The conclusion is that die only live system. And from this point of view, life is the process of maintaining, extending life by moving away, moving away the moment of death.

The Specificity of Man

After this conclusion, we look at the evolution in nature. Here we see that more complex and highly organized living species have a wider range of habitats, have a larger brain volume and, most importantly, are characterized by higher life expectancy than simpler and less organized species. According to this indicator, the human species is among the leaders, and among the primates it is an absolute and absolute leader: the life expectancy of a person is 2 times longer than the life expectancy of a chimpanzee.

In addition, people in the process of evolution there is a special period-aging, which is either not at all in the lower organized species or is very short. And aging, as mentioned before, is slow dying. Consequently, man has some resources that push death to a later period.

What are these resources?

These resources are associated with a special way of life that is unique to humans. Let us dwell on this aspect.

At first glance, humanity-is the same living species as all kinds of animals: it is, drinks, sleeps, multiplies, like other biological beings. But this is only at first glance, in fact, between man and animals there is a fundamental, unique difference: the specificity of man as a representative of his species is that since its inception (CRO-magnon man, formed 35-40 thousand years ago) and to the present historical moment, he remained and remains morphologically unchanged, although during this period has made enormous changes in the environment. Other living species can also be morphologically stable, but they maintain their stability by maintaining their ecological niche, that is, the immutability of their environment, while humans continuously and on an increasing scale recycle the environment.

Man achieves this through the use of technology, that is, the creation of artificial tools. As Benjamin Franklin once put it (and then repeated Karl Marx in capital), man is an animal that systematically uses tools. And-I will add-is no longer actually an animal.

Animals, too, use tools, but not artificial, as people, and natural-in the form of organs bodies, for example, in the form of fangs, claws, skins. In other words, animals exist at the expense of their morphology, and the animal world evolves at the expense of changing morphology of species. While man-I emphasize again-is morphologically unchanged. As a result, humanity becomes homogeneous, and the human species is transformed into a race.

However, the morphological dependence in humans does not disappear completely, but moves to a new level-from the level of the species to the level of the individual. That is morphologically changed not the species, as in animals, and the individual. This change is the process of aging, slow dying. Thus, the immortal human race existed and exists at the expense of mortality of a particular human individual.

This is what the situation looked like before, in the past history. But today the situation has changed-modern humanity is no longer immortal, it threatens to disappear from the results of its own activity, from the development of tools, from its superpowers. In this case, we are talking not only about the military threat, but also about new, recent threats-environmental (so to speak, external to humanity) and biotechnological (internal, in the form of the project of transhumanism). The cumulative result of these threats is the above-mentioned trend of depopulation of mankind by reducing the birth rate and increasing mortality from cardiovascular and cancer diseases.

What to do?

Some people hope for new scientific directions, synthetic biology and personalized genomic medicine, which are a variant of positive eugenics. However, if we correctly assess the latest data of evolutionary theory, both of these areas look hopeless and even dangerous. The fact is that the genetic mechanism in the body of animals and in the human body works differently. Consider this question in more detail.

Julian S. Huxley also claimed that genes do not directly determine the morphology (phenotype) of a living organism, but act indirectly, taking into account environmental factors (this effect is actually realized as natural selection, discovered by Charles Darwin). But the external environment of man is different from that of animals-it is not only natural, but also artificial, that is, represented by culture in its totality of phenomena, including tools. Therefore, the genes in humans are different than animals: famous geneticist Richard Lewontin argues that the human genotype is associated with human pinotepa much weaker than all other living species, and it is possible that some historical moment, this relationship has gained a fundamentally new character. This is quite acceptable, because the genome of animals serves their adaptation to the environment and therefore is reproduced along the line of change, whereas the human genome, which adapts nature to itself, should be oriented in the opposite direction-along the line of stabilization.

It follows that the manipulation of the human genome is unlikely to contribute to the cure of diseases, as stated by the representatives of "genomic medicine"; most likely, on the contrary, they will lead to genetic disorders up to the occurrence of deformities and disorders in human heredity.

New Perspective

Where, then, to seek salvation from the natural and technical degeneration that threatens modern humanity? Is it really

necessary to stop the technical development, to stop using the latest tools and return to the primitive state, as suggested by the supporters of the "green civilization", calling for an end to torment the single organism of the Earth-Gays, in the words of James Lovelock?

No, not should abandon technology and scientific progress, just need the full power of modern humanity to be deployed to a new purpose-to extend the life of modern man, his "adjustable immortality," to fight with death in the spirit of the main ideas of Nikolai Fyodorov.

We know that there is no absolute immortality. All non-living and living systems, sooner or later they break, degrade, fall apart. However, there is one organism that is constantly not only alive, but also young due to the continuous process of renewal. This organism-the biosphere, which does not borrow resources from the environment, like all other living systems, and takes them from within, from itself through constant recombination and restructuring of its composition. But the biosphere does it only for itself, in a single copy. To achieve lasting immortality of the human species and a significant extension of the life of the human

individual, it is only necessary to apply such a restructuring in relation to each person. And for this it is necessary to understand the laws of the process of renewal in the biosphere and transfer them to humanity.

There is no doubt that this will require great social changes, changes in the entire system of modern medicine. At the same time, the most difficult is the preliminary process of radical transformation of the thinking of doctors and all medical workers. The task of "regulated immortality" requires a fundamentally different worldview than the one that prevails today: medicine from disease control technology should become a technology for combating aging, and at a much earlier stage than it is understood today. It must be a struggle for youth-a struggle to prolong life-a struggle against death. It is extremely difficult, but it is quite possible. Further research in the field of philosophy and philosophically meaningful medicine will demonstrate exactly how this goal should be achieved. These are the prospects that are outlined in the scientific and philosophical understanding of the main idea of Nikolai Fedorov.



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